TO THE READERS

Though this translation have already past the censure of some, whose judgments I very much esteem: yet because there is something, I know not what, in the censure of a multitude, more terrible than any single judgment, how severe or exact soever, I have thought it discretion in all men, that have to do with so many, and to me, in my want of perfection, necessary, to bespeak your candour. Which that I may upon the better reason hope for, I am willing to acquaint you briefly, upon what grounds I undertook this work at first; and have since, by publishing it, put myself upon the hazard of your censure, with so small hope of glory as from a thing of this nature can be expected. For I know, that mere translations have in them this property: that they may much disgrace, if not well done; but if well, not much commend the doer.

It hath been noted by divers, that Homer in poesy, Aristotle in philosophy, Demosthenes in eloquence, and others of the ancients in other knowledge, do still maintain their primacy: none of them exceeded, some not approached, by any in these later ages. And in the number of these is justly ranked also our Thucydides; a workman no less perfect in his work, than any of the former; and in whom (I believe with many others) the faculty of writing history is at the highest. For the principal and proper work of history being to instruct and enable men, by the knowledge of actions past, to bear themselves prudently in the present and providently towards the future: there is not extant any other (merely human) that doth more naturally and fully perform it, than this of my author. It is true, that there be many excellent and profitable his-

tories written since: and in some of them there be inserted very wise discourses, both of manners and policy. But being discourses inserted, and not of the contexture of the narration, they indeed commend the knowledge of the writer, but not the history itself: the nature whereof is merely narrative. In others, there be subtle conjectures at the secret aims and inward cogitations of such as fall under their pen; which is also none of the least virtues in a history, where conjecture is thoroughly grounded, not forced to serve the purpose of the writer in adorning his style, or manifesting his subtlety in conjecturing. But these conjectures cannot often be certain, unless withal so evident, that the narration itself may be sufficient to suggest the same also to the reader. But Thucydides is one, who, though he never digress to read a lecture, moral or political, upon his own text, nor enter into men's hearts further than the acts themselves evidently guide him: is yet accounted the most politic historiographer that ever writ. The reason whereof I take to be this. He filleth his narrations with that choice of matter, and ordereth them with that judgment, and with such perspicuity and efficacy expresseth himself, that, as Plutarch saith, he maketh his auditor a spectator. For he setteth his reader in the assemblies of the people and in the senate, at their debating; in the streets, at their seditions; and in the field, at their battles. So that look how much a man of understanding might have added to his experience, if he had then lived a beholder of their proceedings, and familiar with the men and business of the time: so much almost may he profit now, by attentive reading of the same here written. He may from the narrations draw out lessons to himself, and of himself be able to trace the drifts and counsels of the actors to their seat.

These virtues of my author did so take my affection, that they begat in me a desire to communicate him further: which was the first occasion that moved me to translate him. For it is an error we easily fall into, to believe that whatsoever pleaseth us, will be in like manner and degree acceptable to all: and to esteem of one another's judgment, as we agree in the liking or dislike of the same things. And in this error peradventure was I, when I thought, that as many of the more judicious as I should communicate him to,

would affect him as much as I myself did. I considered also, that he was exceedingly esteemed of the Italians and French in their own tongues: notwithstanding that he be not very much beholden for it to his interpreters. Of whom (to speak no more than becomes a candidate of your good opinion in the same kind) I may say this: that whereas the author himself so carrieth with him his own light throughout, that the reader may continually see his way before him, and by that which goeth before expect what is to follow; I found it not so in them. The cause whereof, and their excuse, may be this: they followed the Latin of Laurentius Valla, which was not without some errors; and he a Greek copy not so correct as now is extant. Out of French he was done into English (for I need not dissemble to have seen him in English) in the time of King Edward the Sixth: but so, as by multiplication of error he became at length traduced, rather than translated into our language. Hereupon I resolved to take him immediately from the Greek, according to the edition of Æmilius Porta: not refusing or neglecting any version, comment, or other help I could come by. Knowing that when with diligence and leisure I should have done it, though some error might remain, yet they would be errors but of one descent; of which nevertheless I can discover none, and hope they be not many. After I had finished it, it lay long by me: and other reasons taking plaee, my desire to communicate it ceased.

For I saw that, for the greatest part, men came to the reading of history with an affection much like that of the people in Rome: who came to the spectacle of the gladiators with more delight to behold their blood, than their skill in fencing. For they be far more in number, that love to read of great armies, bloody battles, and many thousands slain at once, than that mind the art by which the affairs both of armies and cities be conducted to their ends. I observed likewise, that there were not many whose ears were well accustomed to the names of the places they shall meet with in this history; without the knowledge whereof it can neither patiently be read over, perfectly understood, nor easily remembered: especially being many, as here it falleth out. Because in that age almost every city both in Greece and Sicily, the two main scenes

of this war, was a distinct commonwealth by itself, and a party in the quarrel.

Nevertheless I have thought since, that the former of these considerations ought not to be of any weight at all, to him that can content himself with the few and better sort of readers: who, as they only judge, so is their approbation only considerable. And for the difficulty arising from the ignorance of places, I thought it not so insuperable, but that with convenient pictures of the countries it might be removed. To which purpose, I saw there would be necessary especially two: a general map of Greece, and a general map of Sicily. The latter of these I found already extant, exactly done by Philip Cluverius; which I have caused to be cut, and you have it at the beginning of the sixth book. But for maps of Greece, sufficient for this purpose, I could light on none. For neither are the tables of Ptolomy, and descriptions of those that follow him, accommodate to the time of Thucydides; and therefore few of the places by him mentioned, therein described: nor are those that be, agreeing always with the truth of history. Wherefore I was constrained to draw one as well as I could myself. Which to do, I was to rely for the main figure of the country on the modern description now in reputation: and in that, to set down those places especially (as many as the volume was capable of) which occur in the reading of this author, and to assign them that situation, which, by travel in Strabo, Pausanias, Herodotus, and some other good authors, I saw belonged unto them. And to shew you that I have not played the mountebank in it, putting down exactly some few of the principal, and the rest at adventure, without care and without reason, I have joined with the map an index, that pointeth to the authors which will justify me where I differ from others. With these maps, and those few brief notes in the margin upon such passages as I thought most required them, I supposed the history might be read with very much benefit by all men of good judgment and education, (for whom also it was intended from the beginning by Thucydides), and have therefore at length made my labour public, not without hope to have it accepted. Which if I obtain, though no otherwise than in virtue of the author's excellent matter, it is sufficient.

OF THE LIFE AND HISTORY OF THUCYDIDES

We read of divers men that bear the name of Thucydides. There is Thucydides a Pharsalian, mentioned in the eighth book of this history; who was public host of the Athenians in Pharsalus, and chancing to be at Athens at the time that the government of THE FOUR HUNDRED began to go down, by his interposition and persuasion kept asunder the factions then arming themselves, that they fought not in the city to the ruin of the commonwealth. There is Thucydides the son of Milesias, an Athenian, of the town of Alope, of whom Plutarch speaketh in the life of Pericles; and the same, in all probability, that in the first book of this history is said to have had the charge of forty galleys sent against Samos, about twenty-four years before the beginning of this war. Another Thucydides the son of Ariston, an Athenian also, of the town of Acherdus, was a poet; though of his verses there be nothing extant. But Thucydides the writer of this history, an Athenian, of the town of Halimus, was the son of Olorus (or Orolus) and Hegesypele. His father's name is commonly written Olorus, though in the inscription on his tomb it was Orolus. Howsoever it be written, it is the same that was borne by divers of the kings of Thrace; and imposed on him with respect unto his descent from them. So that though our author (as Cicero saith of him, lib. ii. De Oratore,) had never written an history, yet had not his name not been extant, in regard of his honour and nobility. And not only Plutarch, in the life of Cimon, but also almost all others that have touched this point, affirm directly that he was descended from the Thracian kings: adducing this for proof, that he was of the house of Miltiades, that famous general of the Athenians against the Persians

at Marathon; which they also prove by this, that his tomb was a long time extant amongst the monuments of that family. For near unto the gates of Athens, called Melitides, there was a place named Coela; and in it the monuments called *Cimoniana,* belonging to the family of Miltiades, in which none but such as were of that family might be buried. And amongst those was the monument of Thucydides; with this inscription, THUCYDIDES OROLI HALIMUSIUS. Now Miltiades is confessed by all, to have descended from Olorus king of Thrace; whose daughter another Miltiades, grandfather to this, married and had children by. And Miltiades, that won the memorable victory at Marathon, was heir to goodly possessions and cities in the Chersonnesus of Thrace; over which also he reigned. In Thrace lay also the possessions of Thucydides, and his wealthy mines of gold: as he himself professeth in his fourth book. And although those riches might come to him by a wife (as is also by some affirmed) which he married in Scapte-Hyle, a city of Thrace; yet even by that marriage it appeareth, that his affairs had a relation to that country, and that his nobility was not there unknown. But in what degree of kindred Miltiades and he approached each other, is not anywhere made manifest. Some also have conjectured that he was of the house of the Peisistratides: the ground of whose conjecture hath been only this, that he maketh honourable mention of the government of Peisistratus and his sons, and extenuateth the glory of Harmodius and Aristogeiton; proving that the freeing of the state of Athens from the tyranny of the Peisistratides was falsely ascribed to their fact, (which proceeded from private revenge in a quarrel of love), by which the tyranny ceased not, but grew heavier to the state, till it was at last put down by the Lacedæmonians. But this opinion, as it is not so well-grounded, so neither is it so well received as the former.

Agreeable to his nobility, was his institution in the study of eloquence and philosophy. For in philosophy, he was the scholar (as also was Pericles and Socrates) of Anaxagoras; whose opinions, being of a strain above the apprehension of the vulgar, procured him the estimation of an atheist: which name they bestowed upon all men that thought not as they did of their ridiculous religion,

and in the end cost him his life. And Socrates after him for the like causes underwent the like fortune. It is not therefore much to be regarded, if this other disciple of his were by some reputed an atheist too. For though he were none, yet it is not improbable, but by the light of natural reason he might see enough in the religion of these heathen, to make him think it vain and superstitious; which was enough to make him an atheist in the opinion of the people. In some places of his history he noteth the equivocation of the oracles; and yet he confirmeth an assertion of his own, touching the time this war lasted, by the oracle's prediction. He taxeth Nicias for being too punctual in the observation of the ceremonies of their religion, when he overthrew himself and his army, and indeed the whole dominion and liberty of his country, by it. Yet he commendeth him in another place for his worshipping of the gods, and saith in that respect, he least of all men deserved to come to so great a degree of calamity as he did. So that in his writings our author appeareth to be, on the one side not superstitious, on the other side not an atheist.

In rhetoric, he was the disciple of Antiphon; one (by his description in the eighth book of this history) for power of speech almost a miracle, and feared by the people for his eloquence. Insomuch as in his latter days he lived retired, but so as he gave counsel to, and writ orations for other men that resorted to him to that purpose. It was he that contrived the deposing of the people, and the setting up of the government of THE FOUR HUNDRED. For which also he was put to death, when the people again recovered their authority, notwithstanding that he pleaded his own cause the best of any man to that day.

It need not be doubted, but from such a master Thucydides was sufficiently qualified to have become a great demagogue, and of great authority with the people. But it seemeth he had no desire at all to meddle in the government: because in those days it was impossible for any man to give good and profitable counsel for the commonwealth, and not incur the displeasure of the people. For their opinion was such of their own power, and of the facility of achieving whatsoever action they undertook, that such men only swayed the assemblies, and were esteemed wise and good common-

wealth's men, as did put them upon the most dangerous and desperate enterprizes. Whereas he that gave them temperate and discreet advice, was thought a coward, or not to understand, or else to malign their power. And no marvel: for much prosperity (to which they had now for many years been accustomed) maketh men in love with themselves; and it is hard for any man to love that counsel which maketh him love himself the less. And it holdeth much more in a multitude, than in one man. For a man that reasoneth with himself, will not be ashamed to admit of timorous suggestions in his business, that he may the stronglier provide; but in public deliberations before a multitude, fear (which for the most part adviseth well, though it execute not so) seldom or never sheweth itself or is admitted. By this means it came to pass amongst the Athenians, who thought they were able to do anything, that wicked men and flatterers drave them headlong into those actions that were to ruin them; and the good men either durst not oppose, or if they did, undid themselves. Thucydides therefore, that he might not be either of them that committed or of them that suffered the evil, forbore to come into the assemblies; and propounded to himself a private life, as far as the eminency of so wealthy a person, and the writing of the history he had undertaken, would permit.

For his opinion touching the government of the state, it is manifest that he least of all liked the democracy. And upon divers occasions he noteth the emulation and contention of the demagogues for reputation and glory of wit; with their crossing of each other's counsels, to the damage of the public; the inconsistency of resolutions, caused by the diversity of ends and power of rhetoric in the orators; and the desperate actions undertaken upon the flattering advice of such as desired to attain, or to hold what they had attained, of authority and sway amongst the common people. Nor doth it appear that he magnifieth anywhere the authority of *the few:* amongst whom, he saith, every one desireth to be the chief; and they that are undervalued, bear it with less patience than in a democracy; whereupon sedition followeth, and dissolution of the government. He praiseth the government of Athens, when it was mixed of *the few* and *the many;* but more he commendeth it,

both when Peisistratus reigned, (saving that it was an usurped power), and when in the beginning of this war it was democratical in name, but in effect monarchical under Pericles. So that it seemeth, that as he was of regal descent, so he best approved of the regal government. It is therefore no marvel, if he meddled as little as he could in the business of the commonwealth; but gave himself rather to the observation and recording of what was done by those that had the managing thereof. Which also he was no less prompt, diligent, and faithful by the disposition of his mind, than by his fortune, dignity, and wisdom able, to accomplish. How he was disposed to a work of this nature, may be understood by this: that when being a young man he heard Herodotus the historiographer reciting his history in public, (for such was the fashion both of that, and many ages after), he felt so great a sting of emulation, that it drew tears from him: insomuch as Herodotus himself took notice how violently his mind was set on letters, and told his father Olorus. When the Peloponnesian war began to break out, he conjectured truly that it would prove an argument worthy of his labour: and no sooner it began, than he began his history; pursuing the same not in that perfect manner in which we see it now, but by way of commentary or plain register of the actions and passages thereof, as from time to time they fell out and came to his knowledge. But such a commentary it was, as might perhaps deserve to be preferred before a history written by another. For it is very probable that the eighth book is left the same as it was when he first writ it: neither beautified with orations, nor so well cemented at the transitions, as the former seven books are. And though he began to write as soon as ever the war was on foot; yet began he not to perfect and polish his history, till after he was banished.

For notwithstanding his retired life upon the coast of Thrace, where his own possessions lay, he could not avoid a service to the state which proved to him afterwards very unfortunate. For whilst he resided in the isle Thasos, it fell out that Brasidas, the Lacedæmonian besieged Amphipolis; a city belonging to the Athenians, on the confines of Thrace and Macedonia, distant from Thasos about half a day's sail. To relieve which, the captain

thereof for the Athenians sent to Thucydides, to levy a power and make haste unto him: for Thucydides was one of the Strategi, that is, had authority to raise forces in those parts for the service of the commonwealth. And he did accordingly; but he came thither one night too late, and found the city already yielded up. And for this he was afterwards banished; as if he had let slip his time through negligence, or purposely put it off upon fear of the enemy. Nevertheless he put himself into the city of Eion, and preserved it to the Athenians with the repulse of Brasidas; which came down from Amphipolis the next morning, and assaulted it. The author of his banishment is supposed to have been Cleon; a most violent sycophant in those times, and thereby also a most acceptable speaker amongst the people. For where affairs succeed amiss, though there want neither providence nor courage in the conduction; yet with those that judge only upon events, the way to calumny is always open and envy, in the likeness of zeal to the public good, easily findeth credit for an accusation.

After his banishment he lived in Scapte-Hyle, a city of Thrace before mentioned, as Plutarch writeth; but yet so, as he went abroad, and was present at the actions of the rest of the war; as appeareth by his own words in his fifth book, where he saith, that he was present at the actions of both parts, and no less at those of the Peloponnesians, by reason of his exile, than those of the Athenians. During this time also he perfected his history, so far as is now to be seen; nor doth it appear that after his exile he ever again enjoyed his country. It is not clear in any author, where, or when, or in what year of his own age he died. Most agree that he died in banishment: yet there be that have written, that after the defeat in Sicily the Athenians decreed a general revocation of all banished persons, except those of the family of Peisistratus; and that he then returned, and was afterwards put to death at Athens. But this is very unlikely to be true, unless by *after* the defeat in Sicily, be meant *so long after*, that it was also after the end of the Peloponnesian war; because Thucydides himself maketh no mention of such return, though he outlived the whole war, as is manifest by his words in the fifth book. For he saith he lived in banishment twenty years after his charge at Amphipolis; which happened

in the eighth year of this war: which, in the whole, lasted but twenty-seven years complete. And in another place he maketh mention of the razing of the long walls between Peiræus and the city; which was the last stroke of this war. They that say he died at Athens, take their conjecture from his monument which was there. But this is not a sufficient argument; for he might be buried there secretly, (as some have written he was), though he died abroad: or his monument might be there, and (as others have affirmed) he not buried in it. In this variety of conjecture, there is nothing more probable than that which is written by Pausanias, where he describeth the monuments of the Athenian city; and saith thus: "The worthy act of Œnobius in the behalf of Thucydides, is not without honour": meaning that he had a statue. "For Œnobius obtained to have a decree passed for his return; who returning was slain by treachery; and his sepulchre is near the gates called Melitides." He died, as saith Marcellinus, after the seven and fiftieth year of his age. And if it be true that is written by A. Gellius, of the ages of Hellanicus, Herodotus, and Thucydides, then died he not before the sixty-eighth year. For if he were forty when the war began, and lived (as he did certainly) to see it ended, he might be more when he died, but not less than sixty-eight years of age. What children he left, is not manifest. Plato in Menone, maketh mention of Milesias and Stephanus, sons of a Thucydides of a very noble family; but it is clear they were of Thucydides the rival of Pericles, both by the name Milesias, and because this Thucydides also was of the family of Miltiades, as Plutarch testifieth in the life of Cimon. That he had a son, is affirmed by Marcellinus out of the authority of Polemon; but of his name there is no mention, save that a learned man readeth there in the place of θοε . . . . (which is in the imperfect copy), Timotheus. Thus much of the person of Thucydides.

Now for his writings, two things are to be considered in them: *truth* and *elocution*. For in *truth* consisteth the *soul*, and in *elocution* the *body* of history. The latter without the former, is but a picture of history; and the former without the latter, unapt to instruct. But let us see how our author hath acquitted himself in both. For the faith of this history, I shall have the less to say: in

respect that no man hath ever yet called it into question. Nor indeed could any man justly doubt of the truth of that writer, in whom they had nothing at all to suspect of those things that could have caused him either voluntarily to lie, or ignorantly to deliver an untruth. He overtasked not himself by undertaking an history of things done long before his time, and of which he was not able to inform himself. He was a man that had as much means, in regard both of his dignity and wealth, to find the truth of what he relateth, as was needful for a man to have. He used as much diligence in search of the truth, (noting every thing whilst it was fresh in memory, and laying out his wealth upon intelligence), as was possible for a man to use. He affected least of any man the acclamations of popular auditories, and wrote not his history to win present applause, as was the use of that age: but for a monument to instruct the ages to come; which he professeth himself, and entitleth his book ΚΤΗΜΑ ΕΣ ΑΕΙ, *a possession for everlasting.* He was far from the necessity of servile writers, either to fear or flatter. And whereas he may peradventure be thought to have been malevolent towards his country, because they deserved to have him so; yet hath he not written any thing that discovereth such passion. Nor is there any thing written of them that tendeth to their dishonour as Athenians, but only as *people;* and that by the necessity of the narration, not by any sought digression. So that no word of his, but their own actions do sometimes reproach them. In sum, if the truth of a history did ever appear by the manner of relating, it doth so in this history: so coherent, perspicuous and persuasive is the whole narration, and every part thereof.

In the *elocution* also, two things are considerable: *disposition* or *method*, and *style*. Of the *disposition* here used by Thucydides, it will be sufficient in this place briefly to observe only this: that in his first book, first he hath, by way of exordium, derived the state of Greece from the cradle to the vigorous stature it then was at when he began to write: and next, declared the causes, both real and pretended, of the war he was to write of. In the rest, in which he handleth the war itself, he followeth distinctly and purely the order of time throughout; relating that came to pass from year to year, and subdividing each year into a summer and

winter. The grounds and motives of every action he setteth down before the action itself, either narratively, or else contriveth them into the form of *deliberative orations* in the persons of such as from time to time bare sway in the commonwealth. After the actions, when there is just occasion, he giveth his judgment of them; shewing by what means the success came either to be furthered or hindered. Digressions for instruction's cause, and other such open conveyances of precepts, (which is the philosopher's part), he never useth; as having so clearly set before men's eyes the ways and events of good and evil counsels, that the narration itself doth secretly instruct the reader, and more effectually than can possibly be done by precept.

For his *style*, I refer it to the judgment of divers ancient and competent judges. Plutarch in his book, *De gloria Atheniensium*, saith of him thus: "Thucydides aimeth always at this; to make his auditor a spectator, and to cast his reader into the same passions that they were in that were beholders. The manner how Demosthenes arranged the Athenians on the rugged shore before Pylus; how Brasidas urged the steersman to run his galley aground; how he went to the ladder or place in the galley for descent; how he was hurt, and swooned, and fell down on the ledges of the galley; how the Spartans fought after the manner of a land-fight upon the sea, and the Athenians of a sea-fight upon land: again, in the Sicilian war, how a battle was fought by sea and land with equal fortune: these things, I say, are so described and so evidently set before our eyes, that the mind of the reader is no less affected therewith than if he had been present in the actions." There is for his perspicuity. Cicero in his book entitled *Orator*, speaking of the affection of divers Greek rhetoricians, saith thus: "And therefore Herodotus and Thucydides are the more admirable. For though they lived in the same age with those I have before named," (meaning Thrasymachus, Gorgias, and Theodorus), "yet were they far from this kind of delicacy, or rather indeed foolery. For the one without rub, gently glideth like a still river; and the other" (meaning Thucydides) "runs stronglier, and in matter of war, as it were, bloweth a trumpet of war. And in these two (as saith Theophrastus) history hath roused herself, and adventured to speak, but more

copiously, and with more ornament than in those that were before them." This commends the gravity and the dignity of his language. Again in his second book, *De Oratore*, thus: "Thucydides, in the art of speaking, hath in my opinion far exceeded them all. For he is so full of matter, that the number of his sentences doth almost reach to the number of his words; and in his words he is so apt and so close, that it is hard to say whether his words do more illustrate his sentences, or his sentences his words." There is for the pithiness and strength of his style. Lastly, for the purity and propriety, I cite Dionysius Halicarnassius: whose testimony is the stronger in this point, because he was a Greek rhetorician for his faculty, and for his affection, one that would no further commend him than of necessity he must. His words are these: "There is one virtue in eloquence, the chiefest of all the rest, and without which there is no other goodness in speech. What is that? That the language be pure, and retain the propriety of the Greek tongue. This they both observe diligently. For Herodotus is the best rule of the Ionic, and Thucydides of the Attic dialect." These testimonies are not needful to him that hath read the history itself; nor at all, but that this samè Dionysius hath taken so much pains, and applied so much of his faculty in rhetoric, to the extenuating of the worth thereof. Moreover, I have thought it necessary to take out the principal objections he maketh against him; and without many words of mine own to leave them to the consideration of the reader. And first, Dionysius saith thus: "The principal and most necessary office of any man that intendeth to write a history, is to choose a noble argument, and grateful to such as shall read it. And this Herodotus, in my opinion, hath done better than Thucydides. For Herodotus hath written the joint history both of the Greeks and barbarians, to save from oblivion, &c. But Thucydides writeth one only war, and that neither honourable nor fortunate; which principally were to be wished never to have been; and next, never to have been remembered nor known to posterity. And that he took an evil argument in hand, he maketh it manifest in his proeme, saying: *that many cities were in that war made desolate and utterly destroyed, partly by barbarians, partly by the Greeks themselves: so many banishments, and so much slaughter*

of men, as never was the like before, &c.: so that the hearers will abhor it at the first propounding. Now by how much it is better to write of the wonderful acts both of the barbarians and Grecians, than of the pitiful and horrible calamities of the Grecians; so much wiser is Herodotus in the choice of his argument than Thucydides."

Now let any man consider whether it be not more reasonable to say: That the principal and most necessary office of him that will write a history, is to take such an argument as is both within his power well to handle, and profitable to posterity that shall read it, which Thucydides, in the opinion of all men, hath done better than Herodotus: for Herodotus undertook to write of those things, of which it was impossible for him to know the truth; and which delight more the ear with fabulous narrations, than satisfy the mind with truth: but Thucydides writeth one war; which, how it was carried from the beginning to the end, he was able certainly to inform himself: and by propounding in his proeme the miseries that happened in the same, he sheweth that it was a great war, and worthy to be known; and not to be concealed from posterity, for the calamities that then fell upon the Grecians; but the rather to be truly delivered unto them, for that men profit more by looking on adverse events, than on prosperity: therefore by how much men's miseries do better instruct, than their good success; by so much was Thucydides more happy in taking his argument, than Herodotus was wise in choosing his.

Dionysius again saith thus: "The next office of him that will write a history, is to know where to begin, and where to end. And in this point Herodotus seemeth to be far more discreet than Thucydides. For in the first place he layeth down the cause for which the barbarians began to injure the Grecians; and going on, maketh an end at the punishment and the revenge taken on the barbarians. But Thucydides begins at the good estate of the Grecians; which, being a Grecian and an Athenian, he ought not to have done: nor ought he, being of that dignity amongst the Athenians, so evidently to have laid the fault of the war upon his own city, when there were other occasions enough to which he might have imputed it. Nor ought he to have begun with the

business of the Corcyræans, but at the more noble acts of his country, which they did immediately after the Persian war: which afterward in convenient place he mentioneth, but it is but cursorily, and not as he ought. And when he had declared those with much affection, as a lover of his country, then he should have brought in, how that the Lacedæmonians, through envy and fear, but pretending other causes, began the war: and so have descended to the Corcyræan business, and the decree against the Megareans, or whatsoever else he had to put in. Then in the ending of his history, there be many errors committed. For though he profess he was present in the whole war, and that he would write it all: yet he ends with the naval battle at Cynos-sema, which was fought in the twenty-first year of the war. Whereas it had been better to have gone through with it, and ended his history with that admirable and grateful return of the banished Athenians from Phile; at which time the city recovered her liberty."

To this I say, that it was the duty of him that had undertaken to write the history of the Peloponnesian war, to begin his narration no further off than at the causes of the same, whether the Grecians were then in good or in evil estate. And if the injury, upon which the war arose, proceeded from the Athenians; then the writer, though an Athenian and honoured in his country, ought to declare the same; and not to seek nor take, though at hand, any other occasion to transfer the fault. And that the acts done before the time comprehended in the war he writ of, ought to have been touched but cursorily, and no more than may serve for the enlightening of the history to follow, how noble soever those acts have been. Which when he had thus touched, without affection to either side, and not as a lover of his country but of truth; then to have proceeded to the rest with the like indifferency. And to have made an end of writing, where the war ended, which he undertook to write; not producing his history beyond that period, though that which followed were never so admirable and acceptable. All this Thucydides hath observed.

These two criminations I have therefore set down at large, translated almost verbatim, that the judgment of Dionysius Halicarnassius may the better appear concerning the main and

principal virtues of a history. I think there was never written so much absurdity in so few lines. He is contrary to the opinion of all men that ever spake of this subject besides himself, and to common sense. For he makes the scope of history, not profit by writing truth, but delight of the hearer, as if it were a song. And the argument of history, he would not by any means have to contain the calamities and misery of his country; these he could have buried in silence: but only their glorious and splendid actions. Amongst the virtues of an historiographer, he reckons affection to his country; study to please the hearer; to write of more than his argument leads him to; and to conceal all actions that were not to the honour of his country. Most manifest vices. He was a rhetorician; and it seemeth he would have nothing written, but that which was most capable of rhetorical ornament. Yet Lucian, a rhetorician also, in a treatise entitled, *How a history ought to be written*, saith thus: "that a writer of history ought, in his writings, to be a foreigner, without country, living under his own law only, subject to no king, nor caring what any man will like or dislike, but laying out the matter as it is."

The third fault he finds is this: that the method of his history is governed by the time, rather than the periods of several actions: for he declares in order what came to pass each summer and winter, and is thereby forced sometimes to leave the narration of a siege, or sedition, or a war, or other action in the middest, and enter into a relation of somewhat else done at the same time, in another place, and to come to the former again when the time requires it. This, saith he, causes confusion in the mind of his hearer, so that he cannot comprehend distinctly the several parts of the history.

Dionysius aimeth still at the delight of the *present* hearer; though Thucydides himself profess that his scope is not that, but to leave his work for a *perpetual possession for posterity:* and then have men leisure enough to comprehend him thoroughly. But indeed, whosoever shall read him once attentively, shall more distinctly conceive of every action this way than the other. And the method is more natural; forasmuch as his purpose being to write of one Peloponnesian war, this way he has incorporated all the

parts thereof into one body; so that there is unity in the whole, and the several narrations are conceived only as parts of that. Whereas the other way, he had sewed together many little histories, and left the Peloponnesian war, which he took for his subject, in a manner unwritten: for neither any part nor the whole could justly have carried such a title.

Fourthly, he accuseth him for the method of his first book: in that he deriveth Greece from the infancy thereof to his own time: and in that he setteth down the narration of the quarrels about Corcyra and Potidæa, before he entreateth of the true cause of the war; which was the greatness of the Athenian dominion, feared and envied by the Lacedæmonians.

For answer to this, I say thus. For the mentioning of the ancient state of Greece, he doth it briefly, insisting no longer upon it than is necessary for the well understanding of the following history. For without some general notions of these first times, many places of the history are the less easy to be understoòd; as depending upon the knowledge of the original of several cities and customs, which could not be at all inserted into the history itself, but must be either supposed to be foreknown by the reader, or else be delivered to him in the beginning as a necessary preface. And for his putting first the narration of the public and avowed cause of this war, and after that the true and inward motive of the same; the reprehension is absurd. For it is plain, that a cause of war divulged and avowed, how slight soever it be, comes within the task of the historiographer, no less than the war itself. For without a pretext, no war follows. This pretext is always an injury received, or pretended to be received. Whereas the inward motive to hostility is but conjectural; and not of that evidence, that a historiographer should be always bound to take notice of it: as envy to the greatness of another state, or fear of an injury to come. Now let any man judge, whether a good writer of history ought to handle, as the principal cause of war, proclaimed injury or concealed envy. In a word, the image of the method used by Thucydides in this point, is this: "The quarrel about Corcyra passed on this manner; and the quarrel about Potidæa on this manner": relating both at large: "and in both the Athenians were accused to have done the

injury. Nevertheless, the Lacedæmonians had not upon this injury entered into a war against them, but that they envied the greatness of their power, and feared the consequence of their ambition." I think a more clear and natural order cannot possibly be devised.

Again he says, that he maketh a funeral oration (which was solemnly done on all occasions through the war) for fifteen horsemen only, that were slain at the brooks called Rheiti: and that for this reason only, that he might make it in the person of Pericles, who was then living, but before another the like occasion happened was dead.

The manner of the Athenians was, that they that were slain the first in any war, should have a solemn funeral in the suburbs of the city. During this war, they had many occasions to put this custom in practice. Seeing therefore it was fit to have that custom and the form of it known, and that once for all, the manner being ever the same; it was the fittest to relate it on the first occasion, what number soever they were that were then buried: which nevertheless is not likely to have been so few as Dionysius saith. For the funeral was not celebrated till the winter after they were slain: so that many more were slain before this solemnity, and may all be accounted amongst the first. And that Pericles performed the office of making their funeral oration, there is no reason alledged by him why it should be doubted.

Another fault he finds, is this: that he introduceth the Athenian generals, in a dialogue with the inhabitants of the Isle of Melos, pretending openly for the cause of their invasion of that isle, the power and will of the state of Athens; and rejecting utterly to enter into any disputation with them concerning the equity of their cause, which, he saith, was contrary to the dignity of the state.

To this may be answered, that the proceeding of these generals was not unlike to divers other actions, that the people of Athens openly took upon them: and therefore it is very likely they were allowed so to proceed. Howsoever, if the Athenian people gave in charge to these their captains, to take in the island by all means whatsoever, without power to report back unto them first the equity of the islanders' cause; as is most likely to be true; I see

then no reason the generals had to enter into disputation with them, whether they should perform their charge or not, but only whether they should do it by fair or foul means; which is the point treated of in this dialogue. Other cavils he hath touching the matter and order of this history, but not needful to be answered.

Then for his phrase, he carpeth at it in infinite places, both for obscure and licentious. He that will see the particular places he reprehendeth, let him read Dionysius himself, if he will: for the matter is too tedious for this place. It is true, that there be some sentences in him somewhat long: not obscure to one that is attentive: and besides that, they are but few. Yet is this the most important fault he findeth. For the rest, the obscurity that is, proceedeth from the profoundness of the sentences; containing contemplations of those human passions, which either dissembled or not commonly discoursed of, do yet carry the greatest sway with men in their public conversation. If then one cannot penetrate into them without much meditation, we are not to expect a man should understand them at the first speaking. Marcellinus saith, he was obscure on purpose; that the common people might not understand him. And not unlikely: for a wise man should so write, (though in words understood by all men), that wise men only should be able to commend him. But this obscurity is not to be in the narrations of things done, nor in the descriptions of places or of battles, in all which Thucydides is most perspicuous: as Plutarch in the words before cited hath testified of him. But in the characters of men's humours and manners, and applying them to affairs of consequence: it is impossible not to be obscure to ordinary capacities, in what words soever a man deliver his mind. If therefore Thucydides in his orations, or in the description of a sedition, or other thing of that kind, be not easily understood; it is of those only that cannot penetrate into the nature of such things, and proceedeth not from any intricacy of expression. Dionysius further findeth fault with his using to set word against word: which the rhetoricians call *antitheta*. Which, as it is in some kind of speech a very great vice, so is it not improper in characters: and of comparative discourses, it is almost the only style.

And whereas he further taxeth him for licentiousness in turning

nouns into verbs, and verbs into nouns, and altering of genders, cases, and numbers; as he doth sometimes for the more efficacy of his style, and without solœcism; I leave him to the answer of Marcellinus: who says, "That Dionysius findeth fault with this, as being ignorant" (yet he was a professed rhetorician) "that this was the most excellent and perfect kind of speaking."

Some man may peradventure desire to know, what motive Dionysius might have to extenuate the worth of him, whom he himself acknowledgeth to have been esteemed by all men for the best by far of all historians that ever wrote, and to have been taken by all the ancient orators and philosophers for the measure and rule of writing history. What motive he had to it, I know not: but what glory he might expect by it, is easily known. For having first preferred Herodotus, his countryman, a Halicarnassian, before Thucydides, who was accounted the best; and then conceiving that his own history might perhaps be thought not inferior to that of Herodotus: by this computation he saw the honour of the best historiographer falling on himself. Wherein, in the opinion of all men, he hath misreckoned. And thus much for the objections of Denis of Halicarnasse.

It is written of Demosthenes, the famous orator, that he wrote over the history of Thucydides with his own hand eight times. So much was this work esteemed, even for the eloquence. But yet was this his eloquence not at all fit for the bar; but proper for history, and rather to be read than heard. For words that pass away (as in public orations they must) without pause, ought to be understood with ease, and are lost else: though words that remain in writing for the reader to meditate on, ought rather to be pithy and full. Cicero therefore doth justly set him apart from the rank of pleaders; but withal, he continually giveth him his due for history, (lib. ii. De Oratore): "What great rhetorician ever borrowed any thing of Thucydides? Yet all men praise him, I confess it, as a wise, severe, grave relator of things done: not for a pleader of causes at the bar, but a reporter of war in history. So that he was never reckoned an orator: nor if he had never written a history, had his name therefore not been extant, being a man of honour and nobility. Yet none of them imitate the gravity of his words

and sentences; but when they have uttered a kind of lame and disjointed stuff, they presently think themselves brothers of Thucydides." Again, in his book *De Optimo Oratore*, he saith thus: "But here will stand up Thucydides: for his eloquence is by some admired; and justly. But this is nothing to the orator we seek: for it is one thing to unfold a matter by way of narration; another thing to accuse a man, or clear him by arguments. And in narrations, one thing to stay the hearer, another to stir him." Lucian, in his book entitled *How a history ought to be written*, doth continually exemplify the virtues which he requires in an historiographer by Thucydides. And if a man consider well that whole discourse of his, he shall plainly perceive that the image of this present history, preconceived in Lucian's mind, suggested unto him all the precepts he there delivereth. Lastly, hear the most true and proper commendation of him from Justus Lipsius, in his notes to his book *De Doctrina Civili* in these words: "Thucydides, who hath written not many nor very great matters, hath perhaps yet won the garland from all that have written of matters both many and great. Everywhere for elocution grave; short, and thick with sense; sound in his judgments; everywhere secretly instructing and directing a man's life and actions. In his orations and excursions, almost divine. Whom the oftener you read, the more you shall carry away; yet never be dismissed without appetite. Next to him is Polybius, &c."

And thus much concerning the life and history of Thucydides.